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SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: EVALUATION OF US SPEAKER TOM WOLFE, TRACKER
NUMBER 30751.

¶1. SUMMARY AND DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: Tom Wolfe, one of our country's greatest living writers, put the U.S. Embassy at the center of Argentina's leading cultural and popular event of the year- the Buenos Aires International Book Fair, an event that attracts more than 1.2 million people. With an active Mission press effort prior to his arrival, and careful program planning to reach distinct audiences, Wolfe established his primacy among all invited Argentine and international writers at the 34th Buenos Aires International Book Fair by drawing the largest audience for any event during the three-week fair, filling to capacity a 1,000-seat auditorium, and maintaining press coverage for weeks after his visit. Wolfe's avuncular talk covered a wide range of timely subjects including his trademark "new journalism" which brought him to international fame. However, the core of his message, which riveted the audience, was about U.S. culture. Without intending to be a defender or promoter, his broad historical context and semi-detached perspective provided his Argentine audience with a great deal of food for thought.

The audience soaked up the information and sought more from the charismatic speaker. A large crowd followed Wolfe to the stand of his Argentine publisher to purchase his book, get an autograph, or simply chat more about his experience as a writer and a journalist. A reception at the Ambassador's residence provided an opportunity for members of Argentina's media and cultural elite to meet and talk with Wolfe. His lecture on "New Journalism" for an audience of more than 200 journalism students at the popular MALBA Museum was another hit. He was also the keynote speaker for the opening ceremony of a Master Journalism Class, sponsored by Clarin, Argentina's leading newspaper. It is rare for a U.S. Embassy-sponsored cultural figure to garner front-page coverage, but combined Mission efforts accomplished just that, with full front-page pictures of Tom Wolfe in his traditional white suit appearing on leading cultural magazine covers and multiple feature articles before, during, and after his visit.

Thanks to a carefully planned and executed cultural program and press schedule to engage diverse audiences, the U.S. embassy-sponsored speaker and his message about journalism and U.S. culture dominated the cultural scene for several weeks. Argentine and international press followed Tom Wolfe's visit closely, with almost paparazzi-like attention. Coverage of his activities in Buenos Aires potentially reached tens of millions of Argentines through broad newspaper, wire service, and television coverage.

¶2. DATE, FISCAL YEAR, QUARTER: May 2-6, 2008; FY 08; SECOND QUARTER.

¶3. TRACKER NUMBER, MISSION PROGRAM PLAN THEME AND AUDIENCE REACHED: TRACKER NUMBER 30751. More than 1,500 people attended his activities in Buenos Aires in person. Coverage of his activities in Buenos Aires potentially reached tens of millions of Argentines through broad newspaper, wire service, and television coverage. Spanish, Chilean, Brazilian, German and U.S. journalists participated in his press conferences and attended his speeches, attesting to the international stature of one of the greatest living U.S. writers.

¶4. RESULT/IMPACT: Hosting a talented and renowned writer such as Tom Wolfe sent a strong message to Argentines that the U.S. Embassy is committed to the highest quality cultural and intellectual exchange. In speeches at the Book Fair, with journalism students, at literary events, in press conferences and multiple television interviews, Tom Wolfe emphasized the role of non-fiction in chronicling the true spirit of the times. He urged journalism students and editors to fulfill their democratic responsibility to focus on reporting the truth. He encouraged writers and readers to create and demand more "realistic" fiction, more narrative reporting to paint the complexity of the world in which we live. Major national newspapers ("Clarín's" leading cultural magazine "N", "Buenos Aires Herald's"

"GetOut" Supplement, "Página 12's" "C&E" - "Cultura y Espectáculos" supplement, "Perfil", "La Prensa", business-financial "Ámbito Financiero", radio stations and TV channels (America TV, viewership 400,000; and Channel 13, viewership 2,000,000) carried interviews with the famous journalist. The author urged young writers to either "get out of your apartments" and "get out on the streets" to report reality or face extinction.

¶5. NON-USG SOURCES OF IN-COUNTRY FUNDING/IN-KIND SUPPORT: American Airlines, Faena Hotel and Clarín co-sponsored the program.

¶6. QUALITY OF U.S. SUPPORT AND IIP OFFICES INVOLVED: Excellent. Mike Bandler worked hard to find us a high-profile, award-winning, best-selling author whose books are known in Argentina and worldwide. Post very much appreciates the energy and enthusiasm Mike put into the recruitment of Tom Wolfe, as well as the thorough and professional support given by Camille Barone in IIP/WHA.

¶7. THANKS AND REGARDS.

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